



NEWS

from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

October 4, 1996

Hugh Vickery 202-208-5634

**SERVICE PROPOSES GRANTING STATES ANNUAL PERMITS
TO CONTROL RESIDENT GEESE**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today it is considering granting states annual permits to control injurious resident Canada geese during the spring and summer. These permits will make it easier for states to take quick action when the birds become a hazard to property and public safety. No final decision will be made on the issuance of such permits until after a thorough review of public comments.

Under the proposal, between March 11 and August 31, states would not have to obtain a new permit from the Service each time they determined that a Canada goose control action is necessary, as is currently required. At other times, states would still have to obtain permits to ensure these efforts do not interfere with effective regulation and monitoring of migratory bird harvests.

"Populations of resident Canada geese have exploded in recent years so that in many places they destroy property, foul parks and other lands, or pose a safety threat near airports," said Paul Schmidt, chief of the Service's migratory bird management office. "Increasingly, citizens are calling on state wildlife and animal control officers to intervene. This proposal will make it easier for the states to take responsible action."

Wildlife agencies recognize and manage Canada geese by distinct populations. The majority of these populations nest in the Arctic and winter in the United States; however, several populations remain in the temperate climates throughout the year and often are called "resident." While "migratory" and "resident" birds look very similar and often intermingle, they do not interbreed nor do birds shift from one population to the other.

The proposal focuses on resident Canada geese that live year-round in the United States. These non-migrating birds have settled onto golf courses, urban parks, and other protected areas that offer excellent year-round habitat both low in predators and high in food supply.

Control efforts include harassment, culling, and trapping and relocating injurious flocks. They generally are employed in areas where reducing populations through hunting is not possible.

Office of Public Affairs
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240
Room 3447

(202) 208-5634
FAX (202) 219-2428

The Service has prepared a draft environmental assessment that provides details of the proposed change in the permitting process. The environmental assessment and the draft proposed regulation are available for review by sending a written request to the Chief, Office of Migratory Bird Management, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Arlington, VA 22203. Comments received before October 18 will be considered during the evaluation and review of the draft environmental assessment.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency with responsibility for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages 511 national wildlife refuges covering 92 million acres, as well as 72 national fish hatcheries.

The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, manages migratory bird populations, stocks recreational fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, administers the Endangered Species Act, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that funnels Federal excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state wildlife agencies. This program is a cornerstone of the Nation's wildlife management efforts, funding fish and wildlife restoration, boating access, hunter education, shooting ranges, and related projects across America.